

FREE TAX ASSISTANCE

Fast and reliable assistance for the 1999 tax filing season is as close as your personal computer, your telephone or your fax machine. A user-friendly website and toll-free help lines will make it easier than ever to access the 5,000-plus tax products and services offered by the Internal Revenue Service. For those taxpayers with Internet access, the IRS home page has forms, publications and lots of helpful information. Beginning in January, telephone assistance will be available 24 hours a day/seven days a week. If you prefer to drop by an IRS office, Saturday hours have been expanded at 250 sites.

Of course, the first place to look for answers to tax season questions is your 1998 tax package. It contains tips for avoiding common mistakes and guidance for taxpayers who need help.

TAX HELP ON-LINE

Taxpayers accessed the IRS homepage on the World Wide Web more than 340 million times in fiscal year 1998, downloading over 35 million forms, publications and a variety of topic-oriented tax information. Anyone with Internet access can receive:

- tax forms, instructions, and publications;
- the latest tax information and tax law changes;
- tax tables and rate schedules;
- Publication 17, "Your Federal Income Tax"
- all TeleTax topics;
- answers to the most frequently asked tax questions;
- a library of tax regulations;
- the weekly Internal Revenue Bulletin, which contains all the latest revenue rulings, revenue procedures, notices, announcements, proposed regulations and final regulations.

Taxpayers can access the IRS homepage at -- www.irs.ustreas.gov

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TAX ASSISTANCE BY TELEPHONE

Need a form? Call the IRS special forms order line or try IRS TaxFax. Checking on a tax refund? Call the TeleTax line for quick service. Still need help? The IRS tax assistance phone service has expanded hours.

Tax Assistance -- 1-800-829-1040

Taxpayers who can't answer their tax questions by reading the tax form instructions or the free tax publications can call the IRS for help. Beginning in January 1999, telephone tax assistance will be available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Recorded Tax Information -- 1-800-829-4477

TeleTax has more than 140 topics available 24 hours a day using a Touch-Tone phone. Taxpayers can call 1-800-829-4477 toll-free to hear recorded information on tax subjects such as earned income credit, child care/elderly credit, dependents, innocent spouse relief or other topics such as electronic filing, which form to use, or what to do if you can't pay your taxes. Nearly 9.6 million taxpayers used TeleTax last year for recorded tax information. TeleTax topics are also available on line at the IRS Website.

Forms and Publications -- 1-800-TAX-FORM (1-800-829-3676)

Free copies of current and prior year forms, instructions and publications are available by calling the IRS. Your order should arrive within 10 days.

Forms by Fax -- (703) 368-9694

Taxpayers can receive about 100 different tax forms 24 hours a day by calling IRS TaxFax. In addition to forms and instructions, copies of TeleTax topics and small business newsletters are available. Taxpayers must call from the telephone connected to the fax machine to use this service.

Automated Refund Information -- 1-800-829-4477

Automated tax refund information is available on the TeleTax system from 7 a.m. to 11 p.m. ET Monday through Friday and from 7 a.m. to 4 p.m. ET on Saturdays. Taxpayers should wait at least four weeks after filing a return before calling to check on the status of a refund.

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WALK-IN HELP

Forms, publications and tax help are available at more than 400 IRS offices nationwide. During the 1999 filing season, walk-in service will be offered on 13 Saturdays--January 16 through April 10--at 250 sites. The focus for the first six Saturday sessions will be the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC).

Some of the most requested tax forms, instructions and publications are also available at many post offices and libraries.

CD-ROM

The 1998 federal tax forms CD-ROM contains more than 2,500 tax products including forms instructions, and topic-oriented tax information. Users can electronically search, view on-screen or print any of the items contained on the CD.

Buy the CD-ROM on the Internet at www.irs.ustreas.gov/cdorders for \$13 (plus a \$5 handling fee), and save 35% or call 1-877-CDFORMS (1-877-233-6767) toll-free to buy the CD-ROM for \$20 (plus a \$5 handling fee).

VOLUNTEER PROGRAMS

Millions of taxpayers were assisted last filing season at more than 16,000 IRS Volunteer Income Tax Assistance sites and Tax Counseling for the Elderly sites. These volunteer programs are set up in shopping centers, libraries, churches or community centers. Taxpayers should check their local newspapers to find these site locations.

PROBLEM SOLVING

The IRS Problem Resolution Program provides assistance to taxpayers whose problems are not resolved through normal IRS channels. The IRS has a National Taxpayer Advocate and each IRS district and service center has a Problem Resolution Office and a local Taxpayer Advocate.

If taxpayers have problems that haven't been resolved by prior contacts with the IRS, they can call the new toll-free help line at 1-877-777-4778. Around-the-clock service will be available beginning in January.

In addition, IRS Problem Solving Days will continue to be held once-a-month throughout the year. Dates and locations are available on the IRS homepage at www.irs.ustreas.gov and are publicized by local media.